

SUSFOODBEL

Transitioning to healthy diets from sustainable food systems in Belgium: Priority policy actions and their multiple sustainability impacts

DURATION
01/09/2022 – 01/12/2026

BUDGET
945.657 €

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Context

In Belgium about 20% of total greenhouse gas emissions are due to the food system (including 10% due to agricultural production). Creating healthy diets from sustainable food systems is key to transition to a carbon-neutral society in Belgium.

General objectives

The main focus of the SUSFOODBEL project is to measure multiple direct and indirect sustainability impacts of transitioning from current diets to healthy diets from sustainable food systems in Belgium, as well as the contributions of the prioritized policy actions to realize such a transition.

The key objectives are:

- 1) To identify priority policies and their dietary trajectory scenarios based on a novel food policy index, a business impact assessment on population nutrition and the environment, a representative consumer survey and consumer experiments;
- 2) To develop and apply a tailor-made LCA-based sustainability impact assessment framework to assess multiple sustainability impacts of selected priority policies and dietary trajectory scenarios;
- 3) To conduct, for the priority policies, a systemic exploration of trade-offs and synergies across actors, policy domains and governance levels, and of in(coherences) across those priority policies.

Methodology

In this project, novel tools and processes (food policy index, business impact assessment on nutrition and the environment) will be applied to evaluate in-depth, with strong stakeholder engagement and participation, the current policies of Belgian governments and the commitments and practices of major Belgian food businesses as well as to derive key priority policies and their trajectory scenarios from farm to fork to create healthy diets from sustainable food systems. Such diets will be defined using the EAT Lancet recommendations adapted to the Belgian context. Consumers appetite, as well as governments' and businesses' readiness to implement these priority actions will be assessed.

A comprehensive Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA) framework will be developed to measure multiple direct and indirect sustainability impacts of transitioning from current diets to healthy diets from sustainable food systems in Belgium, as well as the contributions of the prioritized policy actions to realize such a transition. Sustainability impacts include impacts on the natural environment (i.e. ecosystem quality, human health, resource depletion end points) and diverse social and socioeconomic effects (i.e. consumer's food purchases, diets, diet cost and affordability, health and health inequalities, and health care costs and expenditures). To inform the final set of policy recommendations for the federal Government, a systemic exploration of trade-offs and synergies across actors, policy domains and governance levels will be conducted for each of the priority policy actions.



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Potential impact of the research

Concrete policy recommendations will be formulated for the federal Government, taking into account their estimated sustainability impacts, as well as diverse implementation considerations (i.e. consumers' acceptability, barriers and enablers to policy implementation, synergies and trade-offs across actors, policy domains and governance levels and (in)coherences across policy actions identified). It is anticipated that this project will result in a proposal for a national agenda with concrete priority actions to create healthy diets from sustainable food systems.

Expected final research results

The tools and processes used in the project, such as the food policy index, the business impact assessment on population nutrition and the environment and a tailor-made LCA-based sustainability impact assessment framework can support the federal Government to track progress over time on the transition to sustainable healthy diets and to estimate the different sustainability impacts of future proposed policies.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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LINKS